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WAR SELECTION IN THE PHILIPPINES

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IT has been assumed by writers on the relation of war to racial development—and I am sure the assumption is correct—that fighting has at some time been necessary to keep up the quality of the race. Some kind of struggle, war or economic competition, or something of this kind, must have been necessary to maintain human progress from the time that man acquired such a mastery over the rest of nature that he was spared the necessity of a real struggle with other animals. I have had the impression from some of the early papers of Dr. Jordan that he granted the correctness of this assumption, but believed that modern warfare was peculiar in not having this selection value. This would have implied, even if it were not stated, that the wars of ancient but historical people did have a selection value. This is explicitly denied in “War and the Breed,” and is certainly denied with right. In the wars of the Greeks, selection of the best by survival was probably even less likely than it is in the present European war. In the warfare of to-day, the best are eliminated both because they are admitted to the army, and because the brave ones sometimes get a chance to expose themselves; but in the present warfare, there is so little chance to select the enemy to be killed, that the picking of the victims is essentially without any choice whatever. In the warfare of the Greeks, even leaving the Spartan out of account, social custom drove the good citizen to war and forced the brave man to expose himself at almost every opportunity. The brave or the strong man was driven by the full force of social pressure and by his own sense of honor to take every possible risk, and this, of course, eliminated the best more rapidly than would be done by the present war. Beyond this, the man of ability was most dangerous to the enemy, and as a general proposition, there was particular glory to be acquired by killing a notable foe. This placed the best warriors at a considerable disadvantage as compared with their present position.

I note a passage in Thucydides. The Athenians captured a considerable body of Spartans on the Island of Sphacteria. Some of the Athenians were deriding one of the captives and asked him if the ones who had been killed had not been braver men. The captive replied that it would have to be a very wise arrow which could distinguish the brave from the cowardly. His comment would place warfare where it is to-day, an indiscriminate slaughter of the combatants.

I have had considerable opportunity during twelve years in this part of the world to see the effect of warfare of various kinds on the race. It seems to me that we have in the Philippines illustrations of both

good and bad racial effects of fighting. Our Moro population is one which has made fighting its chief business for centuries. The Moros entered the Philippines in the fifteenth century, and for the 450 years since that time they have not done much except fighting. Because of the school of ethics in which they are brought up, they are the best fighters in this part of the world. Give them the same weapons and they would be practically certain to overcome an equal number of Filipinos. At any rate, if both sides were given primitive weapons, this would be true. From such evidence as we have, it seems safe to conclude that four or five centuries ago, the Moro was the best man in the Philippines in almost every respect. To-day, he is decidedly the inferior of the Filipino for every purpose except fighting. I will make this general statement without any reservation in spite of the fact that the Island of Jolo had a bigger percentage of the population able to read and write fifteen years ago than did any Christian province in the Archipelago. The Moro is uniformly physically inferior to the Filipino, and this is true of both men and women. It is not altogether the Moros' fault that the development of schools has been very backward in the Moro province, but I have had enough experience with individuals to conclude, for myself, that the Moro of to-day is intellectually inferior to the Filipino. Another effect of centuries of fighting is that there is a very conspicuous tendency to prompt degeneration when war is stopped. When the Moro is kept from fighting, as has happened in certain districts, notably around Zamboanga, and is given the same opportunity which the Filipino has had in most places to develop industrially, instead of doing this he becomes as worthless as a human being can be. It may still prove to be possible to develop the Moro industrially, but it is a certain fact that he makes practically no start at all in developing himself. It is this degeneration when the fighting ceases which I would call the most conspicuous evidence of the destructive effect of centuries of fighting. As a matter of opinion merely, I would say that the Moro will admit of being developed. It is my impression from living among various people, that there is very little difference in their susceptibility to development and, to this extent, I believe that even the bad effect of warfare can be overrated. War does more damage by far in removing those who could be leaders in development, and cutting off the capacity for leadership from the following generations, than it does by lowering the capacity for being developed of the body of survivors.

But, we have in the Philippines still other races than Moros and Filipinos. Among these are the Negritos, about whom I know very little. Possibly they are low enough in the scale of humanity so that they can not be developed as well as most people can be. But there are in the mountain districts of Luzon and Mindanao so-called wild people, pure pagans, who have through all the centuries fought among themselves, just as primitive men must have fought through ages, practically

without firearms; and among whom warfare is either hand to hand or with projectiles which are aimed at individuals instead of masses, so that the essential elements of individual combat are still present. Physically, these wild men contain the best people of the Archipelago. Judged in another way, by the strictness with which they observe their own ethical "code," they are also better than the Filipinos. This strictness in observance of the tribal customs is always a function of conditions of constant struggle. In this respect, the pagan and the Moro are alike and the Christian is inferior, because, during the recent centuries, he has been largely spared the necessity of tribal struggle for existence. As to intellectual ability, we have not enough information about the wild men to justify valid conclusions. There have been in recent years a few Igorots of different tribes who have acquitted themselves excellently as students. I have also known Bagobos, and Mr. Elmer reports a different tribe from Mindanao, who have seemed to us to demonstrate decided intellectual keenness in their dealings with nature. But the fact that the Bagobo is keener in dealing with nature than the Filipino may reasonably be the result of his being placed where he has to be keener. Almost every American who has considerable contact with the Igorot regards him as the best man in the Philippines. Knowing both Igorot and Bagobo, I am disposed to rate the Bagobo of the hills above the Igorot. On the other hand, men thrown in intimate contact with the better class of Filipino scout the idea that the wild man of any kind can be compared with the Filipino. Leaving these opinions as matters of mere opinion, the fact is indisputable that the wild man is physically the best there is in the islands to-day. This superiority is not a function of the altitude. Lukban, for an instance, is an excellent Filipino town, and Lipa is another. These are in altitude between the Bagobo settlements of Sibulan and Todaya. The Bagobos could pick the Filipinos to pieces with their bare hands. There is an old Latin proverb which says that a sound mind goes with a sound body, and I am inclined to believe that their mere physical superiority, even reduced to nothing but better health, would give to Bagobos an advantage in fair intellectual competition, with equal preliminary training, with the Filipinos. To at least this extent, it is my opinion that we have among our wild people evidence of the positive value of personal combat, when the struggle for existence takes this form, as a means of racial improvement. These suggestions are of course sent merely as matters of collateral interest as possibly throwing some light on the outer edges of a big subject.

It thus appears that the Moro originally excelled the Filipino in ability; but has become distinctly inferior, physically and in ability to develop in civilization, as a result of several centuries of chronic war. The Bagobo and Igorot (in the broad sense) exemplify the good results of selection by primitive war on the scale of personal combat.

In this article, I do not venture, however, a prophecy that the
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Bagobo will ever demonstrate any kind of superiority to Filipino or Igorot. The demonstration depends very much upon opportunity. The Igorots, in the broad and rather inaccurate sense in which I have used the words, are a numerous people capable of maintaining a large measure of independence; and they are now receiving what I believe is competent and efficient help in preparation for intercourse with the outside world. The hill Bagobos are few in number and the interference of government in their affairs has not, in my opinion, been very intelligently calculated to preserve them as a strong race. What the government undertook to do, with the best of intentions and with full recognition of the superior vitality of the Bagobo, was to bring him in contact with civilization by bringing him down out of the mountains. I have not seen these people for a number of years, but could anticipate no result of this policy except that most of the Bagobos would become plantation serfs and the more independent minority would become renegades. This was the work of Lieutenant Bolton, one of the men most conspicuous in devotion to the interests of the people under his charge whom I have ever met. The best of intentions may make the most mischief in the attempt to make a race over and improve its conditions without sufficient appreciation of the fact that the direct ability of the race is adapted to the conditions under which this ability has been developed. Lieutenant Bolton was murdered a little later as the result of another attempt to make a powerful savage into a man of influence under more civilized conditions.

We have naturally made mistakes of the same kind in the well-meant attempt of many of our officials to make good Americans out of good Filipinos. The preservation of order in these islands during the past fifteen years has of course been of tremendous value to the people, and the introduction of a general educational organization, even of such an organization patterned very largely after that of the United States, has been another incalculable service. But the transplanting of a scheme of government, including even features of exceedingly doubtful value in America, has brought with it evils some of which will probably never be peacefully outgrown.

These comments are, of course, not relevant to the question of racial selection. They have, however, a bearing on the conditions which make war the foremost subject of world interest at this time. I am a great admirer of real German culture. I have a certain sympathy with the German ambition (even if its profession by the government may be largely hypocritical) to germanize other parts of the world. The trouble with the scheme, aside from its probable impracticability by the methods being tested, is that what is best for Germany is not necessarily best for England and Borneo, any more than what is best for the United States is necessarily best for the Filipino, or what is best for the Filipino is best for the Bagobo.